No mention in WR or in the 26

J. Garret Underhill

Who He Was

Where He Might Have Fit In

Underhill was apparently a Harvard grad; had close connections in Pentagn

John Garrett Underhill was 48 at the time of death. The washington paper listed him as a writer, and said that he "had written on military affairs for Life magazine...and was known as an authority on limited warefare and conventional arms."

At the time of his death he was a research assistant to Charles JV Murphy, military affairs writer for Fortune. Cohen says he was largely responsible for the reportage at Life and Luce's views on the Second World War and Korean War. He knew quite a few of the Russians in Washington and NY and was a friend at one time of Interarmco' Cummings. (though was no longer.) Brynes told Cohen that Underhill was a government intelligence agent during WWII, but knew of no employmen by the CIA in the '60s. Brynes thought Underhill a "brilliant, though minor, tactician," a specialist in small arms with a profound analytical mind that was given to working out problems on paper; that his theories were often original and provactive but that he had trouble carrying them out to rational conclusion and would have had trouble defending them in a courtroom.

There is no mention of him in the 26.

Wife's last known address: (Patricia D.) 3701 Massachusetts Ave., NW Washington 6, DC

The day after the assassination, Underhill went to see friends in Tom's River, New Jersey: Robert and Charlene (charlie) Fitzsimmons. He told them, in a highly agitated manner, that the CIA -- a small clique, concerned with the Far East -- was really responsible for his death, and that Kennedy had learned of it, was going to blow the whistle, and they killed him.

Underhill said that this clique was engaged in (perhaps narcotics) gun-running and other contraband and manipulating political intrigue to serve their ends. Underhill was afraid for his life, he told Mr. Fitzsimmons, and thought he would have to leave the country.

There are friends who later said he had not been mentally right for the last year of his life. His attitude on 11-23 in New York was extremely disturbed; however, if he knew what he was talking about, that would certainly explain his behavior without benefit of insanity.

Gary Underhill

How He Died

Byrnes

This case is perhaps the most mysterious.

According to the official police report, as portrayed in a letter from John B. Layton, Dep. Chief of Police, Chief of Detectives of the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia, the facts are as follows: (Not a direct quote.)

> About 8 p.m., May 8, 1964, Underhill was found in his apartment unconscious, lying in his bed with a bullet wound in his head. There was a pistol in his right hand.
>
> He was taken to DC General Hospital where he was pronounced dead at 11:25 p.m. by a staff doctor. The body was transferred to the morgue.
>
> The coroner conferred with the Homicide squad, then issued a death certificate showing cause of death suicide by shooting.

According to a news report, Underhill's body was found by Asher Byrnes, a N.R. editor and writing collaborator with Underhill. Also, it appears that Byrnes actually discovered the body on May 7, but didn't suspect that he was dead; he told Donovan (or Cohen, or Harris? Not clear.) that the pistol was found under his left side, and that Underhill was right handed. Also, Byrnes thinks that it had a silencer on it. He says that the body was "yellow-green" in color when found, and that he was very obviously dead. Though Byrnes accepts the suicide story, he does say that the Washington police bungled the investigation of Underhill;s death and "that if you could not believe they were so stupid you might think there was some other reason for it." Byrnes knew him since the late '50s. (wasn't no [illegible])

Donovan write Congressman Wm F. Ryan about the following things he had heard: 1/ Underhill had been dead for several days by 5-8; 2/ He was shot behind the left ear; 3/That Underhill feared for his life.

We should contact Ed Cohen or Donovan or Jones Harris for further details before writing this up.